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HOMEMAKERS' CHAT

Wednesday, October 9, 1940

(FOR BROADCAST USE ONLY)

Subject: "GETTING READY FOR WINTER." Information from the Farm Security Administration, U. S. Department of Agriculture.

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The Farm Security Administration tells you today some of the things its borrower families are doing to get ready for winter. Winter, you know, is fast on the way and farm folk have a lot of preparing to do. Low-income farm folk are particularly busy because they have very little money to spend. With them, it's "Make your head save your purse," or do without - and few do without.

An Alabama woman, for example, always buys her family white shoes this time of year - not to save till next summer but to wear right now. She gets them at white shoe sales and, of course, gets a big reduction. But as soon as the shoe clerk has said "Thank you, Madam," she crosses the street to the dime store and buys some black and brown shoe dye. You know the rest, don't you?

Well, whether women think of buying white shoes - or pink or purple - in the fall, they always think of getting out the blankets, quilts, and comforts they have stored away. It's high time right now they were swinging on the clothesline, airing and freshening before they are put on the beds. But some women find they are low on quilts.... or the ones they have are in bad condition.

An FSA borrower's wife in Michigan found she had half a dozen half-worn quilts and not a single good one. To remedy the situation, she just took two at a time, placed one on top of the other so the holes and ragged parts didn't meet, and sewed them together. Then she covered each pair with figured percale and tacked them every few inches so they wouldn't get bunchy or lose their shape. Result - three good quilts instead of six bad ones.

Another woman made herself a brand new quilt at a cost of only thirty cents. She pieced it out of orange-colored feed sacks and unbleached flour sacks. She also used flour sacks for lining. For filling she used wool - soft clean wool her husband had sheared from his own sheep. But she used only second quality wool and left the best to sell. She washed and carded the wool herself. Carding wasn't so hard, she said, once you knew how.

Quite a number of Farm Security housewives card their own wool to make comforts and quilts. They probably save wool all through the year and then go to a community meeting in the fall where an FSA home management supervisor demonstrates the carding process.

Other women fill their quilts with cotton - particularly in the South where cotton is cheap and plentiful. Sometimes women and children scour the fields after the regular picking season is over and gather what is left. One woman sent her children into the cotton field while she herself finished a quilt. It was a rather unusual quilt too. She pieced it from tiny tobacco sacks her husband collected at an army camp. First she ripped up the sacks, washed them, boiled them, then dyed half of them bright yellow and the other half bright blue. After that she ironed them, sewed them together, and put in the cotton filler. Now she has a blue and gold quilt as snug and warm as it is attractive. What's more it will probably last a long long time because the little tobacco sacks are very strong and closely woven.

In Colorado a resourceful woman made the best of bad luck. When a wolf got into her husband's sheep flock and killed some half-grown lambs, she took the skins and made soft warm throw-rugs. The rugs were just the thing to land on when you jump out of bed on chilly mornings and the floor is icy cold. Other women too are making rugs - rag rugs, knitted hooked rugs, plaited rugs, crocheted rugs, and every kind of rug for winter use.

Cleaning also is a fall job among many rural women. One FSA farm wife has not only cleaned her modest home from top to bottom but papered its dirty, cracked-plaster walls with brown laundry paper. In the kitchen she has taken a little light brown house paint and put two coats on her badly worn linoleum floor. This not only improves the looks of the floor but makes it easier to clean and keep clean.

A lot of women do even more cleaning out-doors than in-doors. With them it's clean up, pick up, rake up, and brush up, everywhere they turn. In the yard they pile the wheel barrow or children's wagon full of tin cans, broken bottles, rocks, sticks, scraps of lumber, and other trash, and haul them to a ditch or gully. Then they rick the firewood and stack the kindling. They put old pieces of farm machinery in the barn or shed where they belong. They pull up or mow down weeds that have overgrown the yard. Of course, frost will take care of weeds if left long enough, but not before they have scattered their seed.

Some women use other means to give their yards a beauty treatment. An FSA farm wife has already brought shrubbery from the woods and transplanted it around the house. She also gathered flat stones from the creek bed and made a flagstone walk. The walk is not only neat to look at but will keep the children from tracking mud and snow into the house in bad weather. The same woman had her sons bring buckets of dirt and gravel to fill up low places in the yard - places where water stood when it rained and which kept getting bigger and bigger.

Well, I'd like to go on telling you a lot more things Farm Security families do to get ready for winter, but maybe these are enough to start your own head buzzing with ideas.

